



# Resource Conservation & Development

Massachusetts

## OVERVIEW

Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) is a unique program that helps local people solve their own natural resource problems while improving the economy, protecting the environment and raising the standard of living. The program was created by the Food and Agriculture Act of 1962. It allows communities to form an RC&D Council so that local people lead the RC&D process. The council will identify problems and opportunities, gather information, develop strategies, secure funding and implement projects. As a result, RC&D affects the social, economic and environmental enrichment of the community.

Massachusetts has three authorized RC&D programs: the Berkshire-Pioneer RC&D covering the central and western counties, the Patriot RC&D covering the northeastern counties, and the Pilgrim RC&D covering the southeastern counties. Each RC&D receives technical assistance from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and the services of a full-time Coordinator.

## UNIQUE ASPECTS OF RC&D

- RC&Ds provide valuable conservation services to the community.
- RC&Ds focus on results and people. They are locally driven by volunteers and are supported by the community.
- RC&D Councils expertly leverage and blend local, state and federal resources to solve local concerns.
- Conservation districts, political leaders, government organizations, concerned citizens, environmental groups and community organizations are represented on RC&D Councils or sponsor RC&D projects.
- The RC&D program supports local decision making and management as keys to healthy, sustainable communities.

## LEVERAGING CAPACITY

For each federal dollar spent toward Resource Conservation and Development, 16 additional dollars are leveraged from other sources. RC&D projects are typically funded by local, state or federal grants and donations from private industries or outside sources.

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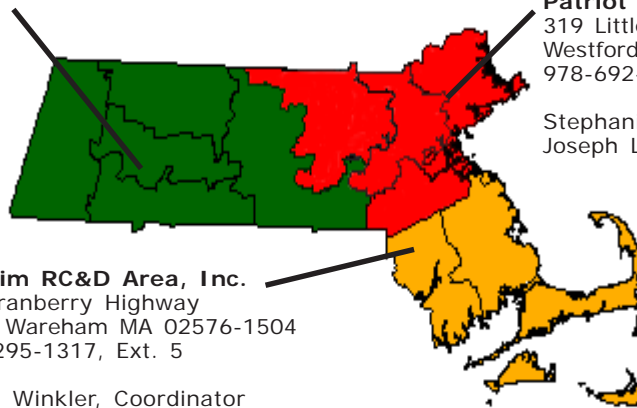
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## BERKSHIRE-PIONEER RC&D AREA, INC.

### Stimulating the Agricultural Economy

#### *Fruit Processing Industry Development*

The RC&D helped a group of fruit growers in Franklin County organize and plan for the establishment of a processing plant for apple and blueberry products. The group has completed market research and has started several mini-businesses for market testing. They are presently forming a formal cooperative before progressing to business expansion.

#### *GPS & Computer Technology for Local Growers*



The RC&D office has worked on a number of high tech projects with fruit and vegetable growers to find new markets for their products and make agricultural production more efficient and of higher quality. By helping farm groups secure grant funds, the RC&D gave growers access to new technologies such as Global Positioning Systems, Geographic Information Systems and custom computer software.

### Improving Markets for Wood Industries

#### *Massachusetts Wood Industries Council*



A Massachusetts Wood Industries Council was established several years ago. It is comprised of saw millers, loggers, furniture makers and other secondary product manufacturers.

The group has launched several projects to help boost the wood industries economy: designing a buyer/seller web site, setting up a statewide promotional campaign, linking export markets and forming a marketing cooperative.

#### *Labor Force Development for Massachusetts Wood Industries*

An offshoot of the Wood Industries Council, this project looks at the dwindling labor force in the forest products sector. By researching school curricula, interviewing wood product businesses and analyzing future marketing trends; the project has unveiled a number of opportunities for wood industries in Massachusetts to improve the quality of their labor force and better compete in today's markets.

### Managing Rural Lands and Water Resources

#### *Southampton Rural Lands Management Project*



Berkshire-Pioneer RC&D coordinated an interagency effort to develop state-of-the-art land use planning methods and computerized mapping techniques to allow small

towns to better manage new growth and conserve natural resources. The Town of Southampton was chosen for this pilot study. A number of innovative growth control and resource protection tools were developed through this process including cluster zoning; performance standards; site plan approval and special zoning for floodplains, farmland, woodland and water supplies. A workbook describing the techniques used to assist Southampton was published for other rural communities who face similar pressure from urban areas.

#### *Private Forest Management Plans for Watersheds*



Due to new environmental and public health regulations, public water suppliers are required to either provide water treatment or adequately protect water quality through watershed land

use control. To help protect water quality in the state-owned Wachusett and Quabbin reservoirs, this project encourages private forestland owners to keep their land in forest cover. Funding provides management planning services from private forestry consultants and cost-sharing on water quality protection practices.

# PILGRIM RC&D AREA, INC.

## Achieving Sustainability & Smart Growth

### *Water Quality and Public Health*



The Billington Sea 319 Project manages and leverages limited federal funds with private funds. It is a partnership between public and private institutions to improve surface and

groundwater quality and public health by planning and installing a Demonstration Shared Alternative Septic System to replace substandard and failing cesspools.

### *GIS Application for the Urban User*

The Urban Soils Project brings higher education institutions together with state environmental management agencies to develop a GIS tool for soil interpretations that helps locate sites for waste disposal systems.

### *Environmental Review Teams*



Teams partner with local, state, federal and private organizations to review and provide recommendations to communities on development proposals, zone changes, open

space preservation and sustainable land use management.

### *Protecting Rural Community Character*

The Town of Dartmouth Agricultural Preservation Trust Council's \$2.75 million Agricultural Land Preservation Fund helps local communities plan and implement methods of farmland and open space protection. The project provides technical assistance with conservation restrictions and agricultural economic development and helps communities leverage funding sources.

## *Collaboration Among Sustainable Community Activities*

The Henry A. Wallace Institute for Alternative Agriculture's Policy Project engages people at the local, regional and national level in the development of local and national food and agriculture policy based on visions of what the agriculture and food system might look like in the future. The project includes visioning, policy research and analysis by policy specialists from the institute, academia, government agencies and non-government organizations.

### *Technical, Financial and Business Assistance*



By partnering with Farm Bureau, USDA, the Massachusetts university system, agricultural cooperatives and the state department of agriculture; the Southeastern Massachusetts

Agricultural Partnership (SEMAP) is able to deliver technical, financial and business assistance to the agricultural industry in southeastern Massachusetts.

### *Waste Utilization*

Coordinating composting services at the regional level results in waste management, waste reduction, resource utilization and job creation. It is also an effective way to utilize municipal and agricultural waste.



## PATRIOT RC&D AREA, INC.

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### Developing a Presence with Initiatives

#### *Are Your Fuel Storage Tanks in Good Shape?*



The Fuel Storage Initiative addresses the environmental hazards caused by some of the fuel storage tanks in our area. It seeks to educate the public

about these potential hazards by providing ideas and examples of good practices in fuel storage. A recently released brochure includes a checklist for owners so they can target the areas where their fuel storage could use improvements.

#### *Open Space Preservation*

Open space in Massachusetts is dwindling due to increasing development, so preservation of open spaces for future use is essential. The importance of historically valuable areas (such as Waitt's Mount or the Emerald Necklace area) is being elevated in the public arena through recommendations from conservation districts and similar groups. This outreach program also targets vital spaces such as parks and islands.

#### *Certified Kitchen Facilities*

This initiative helps farmers and other members of the public to learn how to certify their kitchen facilities in order to meet Massachusetts guidelines and address consumers' concerns. A resource guide has been developed as a reference and is now available.

## Improving Surface & Ground Water Quality

### *Horse Manure Management Initiative*



This program was created so that horse owners could have access to more information about how to deal with their animal waste problems.

The main goal of the HMMI is to provide demonstrations (in print and in person) of good manure management practices and explain how they improve the surface and groundwater quality around horse stables, pastures, and other facilities. The resulting educational products are a pamphlet discussing best management practices and a directory of composters, haulers and receivers of manure. Fact sheets developed by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection are also being made more widely available.

#### *Sponsorship and Assistance for the HMMI*

Several groups have lent assistance to this program, including the Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation, the Massachusetts Stable Owners, Operators and Instructors Association, and the Essex, Middlesex, Norfolk, and Suffolk conservation districts. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service is also participating by providing technical and financial assistance through its cost-share programs.

#### *Education and Outreach*

A directory is available that includes a list of composters, haulers and receivers of manure, and also includes guidelines for best management practices. Further education will be open to the public through workshops.